

CAMPAIGN FINANCE DIVISION

☒ **WAIVER REQUEST**
☐ **RECONSIDERATION REQUEST**

DATE: 4/30/2021
DOCKET #:

FILER INFORMATION

Name: Karelia R. Stewart
Office: District Judge, 1st Judicial District Court, ES 1, Div. D
Parish: CADD0
Election Date: 11/3/2020
Level of Office: District

REPORT INFORMATION

Name of Report: 30-P
Original Due Date: 10/5/2020
Date Filed: 10/15/2020
Activity Receipts: \$0
Expenditures: \$0
Funds at Close of Reporting Period: \$0

LATE FEE INFORMATION

Amount of Late Fee: \$600
Days Late: 10
Late Fee Order Received: 11/4/2020
Payment/Waiver Request Due Date: 11/24/2020
Waiver Request Received: 11/10/2020
Additional Information Requested:
- Medical - DOCUMENTATION ATTACHED
- Financial
- Other

COMMENTS: Waiver was submitted by the candidate and she states that the late filing was due to a family emergency and other circumstances due to a COVID- 19 outbreak. She said that she did not realize she missed the deadline until they had a COVID19 protocol meeting regarding policy for Judges. She immediately called campaign finance and was assisted with filing her report. She was unopposed and the deadline got away from her with all that was going on with her husband and multiple COVID diagnosis in her workplace.

OTHER LATE FEE INFORMATION

Campaign Finance:

Other Outstanding Reports: No
Other Outstanding Late Fees: No
Prior Late Fees: No
Reassessed Late Fees: No

Disclosure Statements:

Other Outstanding Late Fees: No
Prior Late Fees: No

JUDGE KARELIA R. STEWART

P. O. Box 1671
SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA 71165-1671
TELEPHONE: (318) 226-6812
TELECOPIER: (318) 429-7615

CERTIFIED MAIL 7019 0140 0001 1209 5523
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

November 10, 2020

Ms. Melissa Horn
Louisiana Board of Ethics
P.O. Box 4368
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

RE: Late fee assessment for the November 3, 2020 Election
30-P Campaign Finance Disclosure Report filed 10 days late

Dear Ms. Horn:

I am respectfully requesting a waiver of the late fee assessment of \$600.00 due to a family medical emergency and other circumstances due to a COVID-19 outbreak. I was out of the office on Friday, October 2- October 6th. At the recommendation of his treating physician, my husband and I traveled to New Orleans to see a specialist for him to have medical testing and a procedure. I have attached my dockets to support being out of the office to privately handle this matter. Additionally, I have attached the hotel receipt evidencing our stay in New Orleans for the dates of October 3-6. I returned to the office on October 7th to handle my regular court docket. First Judicial District Court continued to have in person court settings with staggered time slots for the parties and attorneys.

On Friday, October 9th, I was notified that the substitute court reporter who had worked in my courtroom earlier in the week, her husband tested positive for Covid-19. Over the weekend, I had no symptoms but had a rapid COVID-19 test that was negative. I had to make sure I was protecting myself in order to not pass anything to my husband who now would be extremely at risk. In the span of two weeks, two additional employees with whom we all use the same common space area, tested positive for COVID-19. My assistant was out of the office due to her elderly mother having to be hospitalized as she was gravely ill. I did not want her in the office while all of this outbreak was going on as she takes care of her mother.

Knowing my husband was home still recovering and my assistant was out, this was an extremely stressful situation having to quarantine and balance the duties of a docket and scheduling court appearances without assistance. Additional stress and frustration were caused by our office still not having a COVID-19 policy and protocol in place for employees and other personnel we supervise. Only while attending our judges' meeting on October 15th to bring up my frustration about our absent COVID-19 policy and procedure, did I realize I had missed the deadline for filing my Candidate's Report.

With the help of my assistant, Sharon, I immediately got on the phone to find out the necessary information to get everything timely filed. When I qualified as a judicial candidate in 2014, I had a campaign treasurer, Susan Whitelaw, who took care of all of the necessary paperwork. We called the Louisiana Ethics

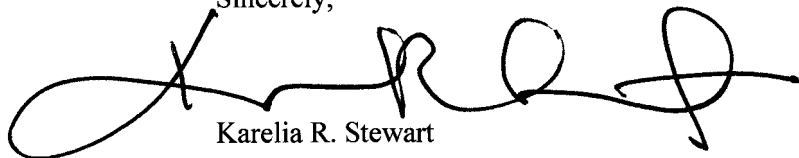
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Administration's office and were transferred to Michelle in the Campaign Finance Department. I was unable to access the system as I did not know the log in information. As previously mentioned, the user name and password were previously set up by Ms. Whitelaw. Michelle assisted me in obtaining the user name to create a new password and I was able to log in and complete the report.

In sum, I qualified timely and did receive my packet with the time deadlines. I did not have an opponent and the deadline absolutely got away from me with all that was going on at the office outbreak and caring for my husband recovering at home. I've never ever ignored any ethics guidelines as a candidate or as a judge. This indeed was a mistake and oversight on my part. However, I do believe I have provided evidence to support good cause as to why my report was not timely filed. I'm respectfully requesting that the late fee be waived. I indeed will appear in person, if necessary, to provide any other specific details.

Thank you for your kindness and professional courtesies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karelia R. Stewart'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Karelia R. Stewart

KRS/slk

Enclosures